

MODULE 1

GETTING READY FOR ONGOING CHILD ASSESSMENT

CONTEXT

Welcome to the final unit of *Steps to Success*. The purpose of this unit is to introduce you to the process of ongoing assessment and its value for helping each child learn and grow. As with all of the other units, the context for this unit is literacy. Throughout Unit 4 you will be deepening your knowledge of phonological awareness and its application in the classroom.

In this module you will continue the *Steps to Success* pattern of completing a self-assessment on your own before participating in Module 2.

OVERVIEW

- Exercise 1: Completing the Self-Assessment
- Exercise 2: Participating in Online Discussions
- Exercise 3: Planning for Assessment

EXERCISE 1: COMPLETING THE SELF-ASSESSMENT

You have now reached your fourth and last self-assessment in *Steps to Success*. You have accumulated a tremendous wealth of knowledge through previous self-assessments, online discussions, and participation in facilitator-led discussions.

You now have the opportunity to think about and assess your knowledge of effective practices that promote children’s phonological awareness skills. Because phonological awareness is recognized as a critical skill for early literacy, good teaching about phonological awareness is essential. When protégés learn to use effective practices for teaching phonological awareness, they strengthen their own practice and every child benefits.

Self-Assessment: Phonological Awareness Knowledge

Below is a set of skills that are important for helping your protégés develop phonological awareness. On a scale of 1 to 5, rate your current skills in addressing situations where you need to:

SKILLS	I AM NOT SKILLED IN THIS AREA		I AM SOMEWHAT SKILLED IN THIS AREA		I AM HIGHLY SKILLED IN THIS AREA
1. Explain to your protégé the concept of phonological awareness and its applications in teaching	1	2	3	4	5
2. Guide your protégé’s planning to provide experiences that focus children’s attention to hearing the sounds in words and speech	1	2	3	4	5
3. Help your protégé use sound and language play in routine activities with infants and toddlers such as diapering, feeding, and dressing	1	2	3	4	5
4. Help your protégé use narrative to describe activities throughout the day so that children are surrounded with language related to their immediate experiences	1	2	3	4	5
5. Help your protégé select and use books that focus attention on the sounds of words and the rhythm of language	1	2	3	4	5
6. Suggest activities to emphasize rhyming and patterns when reading, reciting poetry, or chanting with children	1	2	3	4	5

SKILLS	I AM NOT SKILLED IN THIS AREA		I AM SOMEWHAT SKILLED IN THIS AREA		I AM HIGHLY SKILLED IN THIS AREA
7. Demonstrate games where children match words or pictures that have the same beginning or ending sounds	1	2	3	4	5
8. Suggest music activities that focus on the sounds and rhythm of words and phrases	1	2	3	4	5
9. Suggest games where you clap out the number of syllables in a word and children have to find the object or picture match	1	2	3	4	5
10. Help protégés take children’s dictation, focusing on the sounds in the child’s words rather than the names of the letters	1	2	3	4	5
11. Suggest games and activities that help children learn to connect words and sounds	1	2	3	4	5
12. Teach children to connect the beginning letters in their names with the corresponding sounds.	1	2	3	4	5

Reflecting on Your Self-Assessment

Based on your answers to the self-assessment, do you feel ready to guide protégés in increasing their knowledge about phonological awareness and how to develop children’s phonological awareness? If you feel that you need to learn more, additional resources are available through the Head Start Information and Publication Center (HSIPC) at <http://headstartinfo.org>.

EXERCISE 2: PARTICIPATING IN ONLINE DISCUSSIONS

As you have done in previous units, you will complete this exercise at STEP-Net (<http://www.step-net.org>). Visit the Unit 4 discussion to talk with other Mentor-Coaches from across the country. The discussion will focus on supporting staff to use ongoing child assessment for classroom instruction and planning. A *Steps to Success* staff member will facilitate the discussion, answer questions, and add postings. Please follow these steps before you go to STEP-Net.

1. **Prepare for the discussion.** Read one of the following vignettes about a toddler or a preschool setting. You will read more about these scenarios in Module 2.

Cheryl and Cindy are thinking about how to get to know more about the language skills of Francis, a 12-month-old. Liana and Lee are planning new rhyming activities in Liana's preschool classroom.

Use the space provided to note questions or thoughts you wish to share.

Vignette, Part 1—Cheryl and Cindy (Infant-Toddler)

Francis, at 12 months, is a quiet child who has been attending Cheryl's classroom for a short time. When Cindy, her Mentor-Coach comes in, Cheryl talks about Francis. She wonders about his developing language awareness and thinks about what she has observed with him. She recalls that Francis seems to understand when she speaks to him. She describes how he waves his arms, looks alert, and crawls toward the high chair when she says it is time to eat. He will turn his head when she calls his name and look toward her. Francis does not make many sounds, but Cheryl hears him cooing and squealing when excited. Cheryl wonders how she can encourage Francis to vocalize more. She is unsure about how aware he is of the sounds of language.

As a first step in planning for an assessment of Francis' developing awareness of the sounds of language, Cindy, the Mentor-Coach, asks Cheryl two questions. She asks if Cheryl feels a connection with Francis, and how often she is able to have one-on-one time with him. Cheryl tells her that things have been fairly hectic in the infant room, and because Francis is quiet and fairly even-tempered, he often doesn't get much of her attention. However, Cheryl does feel that she is beginning to develop a relationship with Francis. She has noticed that he is often underfoot near her and is responsive when she does attempt to interact with him.

Vignette, Part 1—Liana and Lee (Preschool)

Liana is a protégé working with preschool children. She recognizes the need to emphasize phonological awareness, so she continually searches for new age-appropriate activities for this outcome. She and her Mentor-Coach, Lee, have talked a lot about the Head Start Child Outcomes Framework and the phonological awareness indicators. Together they have visited a colleague’s classroom to see some of the activities that Liana can use. Liana has decided that she would like to introduce the concept of rhyming to her children.

Liana always makes a point of reading nursery rhymes. Parents respond to the rhymes because they remember many of them from their own childhood. She has been able to get some of these books donated from local businesses so that she can give them to parents.

Since Liana is trying something new, she has decided to be more systematic about her observations. She really wants to see whether her new activities are making a difference. She wants more detail about each child’s responses to the emphasis on rhyming.

Questions or thoughts I wish to share:

2. **Log on to STEP-Net.** Follow the steps below to log on to STEP-Net and to register and participate in the discussion.

Directions for Logging on to STEP-Net:

Go to <http://www.step-net.org>. *Steps to Success* will have its own button on the STEP-Net site. You can click on *Steps to Success* to enter the site.

Directions for Participating in the Discussion:

Please join in! When you log on you will notice that others have posted their thoughts. Read their comments and post your questions or comments. Check in often. You will be able to participate in the discussion for several weeks.

EXERCISE 3: PLANNING FOR ASSESSMENT

During the Unit 4 sessions you will focus on ongoing child assessment. To prepare, you need to know background information about the assessment procedures in your protégé’s program. The goal of this exercise is for both of you to start thinking about assessment in general and about how assessment results make a difference in the way protégés interact with children. Use the following questions to guide the discussion.

Questions to guide your discussion with your protégé

1. What curriculum does your protégé use?

2. Which assessments is the program already using? What information is the protégé already collecting?

3. How is the information collected?

4. How does the protégé summarize assessment results?

5. How does the protégé use assessment results to plan for instruction?

6. What other information would your protégé like to have? What additional information could your protégé collect?
